

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for fixating a suture in a ~~predetermined position~~ substantially perpendicular orientation relative to a pledget, the apparatus comprising:

a block having at least one slit extending therethrough, the at least one slit configured and adapted to engage at least a portion of a first end portion of the suture and at least a portion of a second end portion of the suture to maintain a ~~the predetermined-substantially perpendicular~~ suture/pledget orientation.

2. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one slit is configured and dimensioned to maintain a substantially parallel relationship between first and second end portions of the suture.

3. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one slit is two slits.

4. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the block includes a first face, a second face, and a top face therebetween.

5. (cancelled)

6. (currently amended) A suture pledget assembly comprising:

an elongated suture having a first end portion, a second end portion, and an intermediate portion therebetween;

a pledget having a front wall in an abutting relation to a block such that the front wall substantially contacts at least a portion of the block, the pledget including the intermediate portion of the suture and the intermediate portion is spaced apart from the block; and

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BPE 8/17/05